

called to preach the word, for the seed is "the word of the Kingdom". This labourer encounters many hardships and difficulties, which cause him to mourn, as he goes forth casting the incorruptible seed, into the spiritual field. Yet verily there is a harvest approaching, in which his faithful and persevering labours, humble as they may have been, shall be crowned with everlasting honours.

Making this application of the text, I now in dependence on the Divine blessing invite your attention to the following topics. The ordinary difficulties to be encountered in the Gospel Ministry. The difficulties attendant on it amongst ourselves. And the encouragement to patience and perseverance in our work, which we and all faithful Ministers may derive from the rewards which our adorable Master has graciously connected with it.

I would first advert to some of the ordinary difficulties which are to be encountered in the Gospel Ministry.

The Ministry would have been an anomalous institution in the Gospel Kingdom, if no trials or difficulties had been connected with it. It had been strange indeed, if the officers of a Kingdom which is not of earthly origin, and which aims at the overthrow of the usurped dominion of Satan in our world, could have obtained an ease and security which are denied to any of its subjects. "In the world" said the Saviour to his disciples "Ye shall have tribulation." This is a standing condition to a connexion with his Kingdom: and those ministers whom he employs to discipline, and direct his followers, and to head them on in their enterprises against the spiritual wickednesses which lord it over this world are least of all to expect an exemption from it. The higher responsibilities and honours of their office, will rather expose them to a greater measure of that tribulation in whatever form it may be visited on Christians.

Faithful Ministers then may expect trials from the world; as from its allurements addressing themselves to their depraved hearts: and from its reproach and opposition, drawn out as these may be by their example, and the unmitigated condemnation of the maxims and conduct of the world which their doctrine contains. Private Christians may often from the retiredness of their lives escape any thing like direct opposition. But ministers, who, true to their commission will testify "of the world that its works are evil" must expect something of the treatment which their Master obtained. The shafts of a malicious tongue may not be the only weapons that are directed against them.

Thus from the trials which grow out of our connexion with the Kingdom of God, and our endeavours to extend it, we may sometimes like the dejected husbandman go forth bearing precious seed and weep as we go.

But apart from any active opposition which the world may give to faithful ministers; they have often great cause for sorrow in the character of those, to whom they address the message of the Gospel. All those who have not known and obeyed the Gospel,

whatever be their feeling of security from danger, are in a state of spiritual ruin, and in the way that leads to everlasting perdition. We at least know that this is the case, with all those who give no proof of a regenerated nature, of submission to the saviour, of attachment to his people, and obedience to his laws.

Many may be regarded by us as amiable and even promising, from the domestic and social virtues which are found in their lives, and their stated attendance on religious ordinances. But, alas, alas, they lack one thing, the love of God and the saviour, a supreme concern for spiritual and eternal things. They love the world more than God and we cannot but look upon them, as Jesus did on the young Ruler, with sorrow; inasmuch, as they are far from the Kingdom of God. There are in all our congregations not a few who shew some concern about religion, while yet they seem resolute in keeping it in a subordinate place to the pursuits and occupations of earth. With them it is not "the one thing needful;" but, rather a secondary employment which contributes to their temporal comfort and respectability. There are others again "whose sins are known and read of all men." And some of whose spiritual state we are constrained to stand in doubt.

Now a minister who is going out, and coming in, amongst a people such as these, and who sees them unchanged by his ministry, has a constant cause for sorrow. Paul's bitterest griefs after his conversion, and employment in the ministry of the Gospel were occasioned by the impenitence of his countrymen and the unfaithfulness of many who had numbered themselves with Christ's people. In respect to some of the latter class, he thus wrote in his letter to the Philippians—"many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."—And ah! Brethren—who of us would have dry eyes if our susceptibility for sorrow, at the contemplation of those, who are dishonouring God and ruining their own souls were as tender as was that of Paul?

The attendants in an Hospital may through habit, become in a great measure indifferent to the sufferings of the persons who are assembled within its walls; and yet they may be quite competent for the discharge of their duty to the diseased. But, insensibility to the spiritual wretchedness of sinful men goes far to constitute a disqualification for the ministry of the Gospel. An incapacity to discern the proper remedy for the spiritually diseased comes over us, when, we fail to disarm the disease itself and to feel for it. In this way our ministry is a sowing with tears.

The reception which the word of God obtains from many to whom it is spoken is an occasion of further discouragement to faithful ministers. Our grief at contemplating the spiritual wretchedness of men, would soon give way to joy, did we see them eager to receive the remedy which we bring. To see the spiritually blind enlightened, the moral lepers cleansed,